

Message Text

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43

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-15 EB-11 OMB-01 AID-20 AGR-20 RSR-01 /159 W

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R 241115Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9932

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, CE

SUBJ: COMMONWEALTH PRIME MINISTERS CONFERENCE

REF: COLOMBO 1895

1. DURING DISCUSSIONS WITH MDFA SECRETARY W. T. JAYASINGHE AUG 23, AMB ASKED HOW GSL WOULD CHARACTERIZE CONFERENCE. HE NOTED PRESS REPORTS INDICATED CONFERENCE WAS REMARKABLY UNCONTENTIOUS. JAYASINGHE SAID GSL BELIEVES CONFERENCE WAS VERY SUCCESSFUL DUE MAINLY TO PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU'S SUGGESTION THAT CONFERENCE APPROACH BE INFORMAL AND NOT, AS PREVIOUSLY, BE LIMITED TO ELABORATE SPEECHES PRESENTED BY VARIOUS COUNTRIES. PRIME MINISTER HEATH OF GREAT BRITAIN PARTICULARLY SEEMED TO OPERATE WELL IN THIS ENVIRONMENT.

2. ON QUESTION OF PROBLEMS ARISING FOR SRIL LANKA AS RESULT OF BRITISH ADOPTING EC TARIFF SYSTEM BEGINNING JANUARY NEXT YEAR, JAYASINGHE SAID SOME PROGRESS WAS MADE ON THIS ISSUE. HEATH HAD RECOGNIZED THAT THIS CREATED PROBLEMS FOR COUNTRIES LIKE SRI LANKA

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AND BANGLADESH WHO WERE MAINLY COMMODITY EXPORTERS AND

HAD INDICATED WILLINGNESS TO LOOK INTO PROVIDING CONCESSIONS
ON LONG LIST OF IMPORTS OF WHICH FOUR ARE OF MOST IMPORTANCE TO
CEYLONENE: PACKAGED TEA, INCREASED QUOTA FOR GARMENTS, DESIC-
CATED COCONUT, AND TOBACCO. JAYASINGHE ALSO POINTED OUT
STATEMENT BY NEW ZEALAND THAT BRITISH ENTRY INTO EC DID
NOT NECESSARILY MEAN THAT PREFERENCE SYSTEM WOULD HAVE
TO BE DISBANDED BY REST OF COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES. THUS
THERE IS SOME HOPE THAT GSL COULD RETAIN SOME OF
ADVANTAGE OF THESE PREFERENCES.
VAN HOLLEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 AUG 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: garlanwa
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973COLOMB02142
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: COLOMBO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730818/aaaaamtx.tel
Line Count: 71
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: COLOMBO 1895
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: garlanwa
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07-Jan-2002 by willialc>; APPROVED <23-Jan-2002 by garlanwa>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: COMMONWEALTH PRIME MINISTERS CONFERENCE
TAGS: PFOR, CE
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005